

The One Where Ross Doesn't Remember

by Starway Man

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Summary: Repost, no new text. Ross gets hit on the head and doesn't remember who he is or who any of his friends are.

The One Where Ross Doesn't Remember

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****Author**:** Starway Man

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****Warnings**:** First attempt at FRIENDS fan fiction, that should be warning enough.

****Summary**:** After meeting someone from the old days Ross gets hit on the head and doesn't remember who he is or who any of his friends are. Things get complicated with a trip to Vegas, a lot of alcohol and a career opportunity hard to refuse.

****Title**:** The One Where Ross Doesn't Remember

* * *

><p>It was a busy day at the Central Perk coffee shop when Phoebe Bouffay came running through the doors brandishing a copy of the latest issue of TIME magazine.<p>

"You guys!" she said breathlessly. "You'll never believe who I just saw outside!"

Her friends sitting on the couch just looked at one another. Chandler Bing, Monica Geller and Rachel Green all loved Phoebe, but sometimes her enthusiasm was a little hard to live with.

Chandler couldn't help being sarcastic. "Aliens have landed in Central Park?"

Phoebe whipped her head around for a moment. "Really? When did this happen?"

Monica frowned at him. "Phoebe, he's just kidding. Aren't you Chandler?"

Chandler shrugged. "I don't know, some of the taxi drivers are looking more and more..."

Monica hit him with a newspaper and he shut up. Phoebe stared at them excitedly, all thoughts of the aliens forgotten. "No, look you guys I bought a copy of the magazine just to be sure. It's definitely him!"

Rachel took the magazine. "Phoebe honey, what are you talking about?"

Phoebe gestured wildly at the front cover. "It's him, him, him!"

Just then Ross Geller walked into the coffee shop and sat down, joining the group. "Hey guys," he said tiredly. "What's going on?"

"Nothing important," said Chandler. "It's just that "Invasion of the Body Snatchers" may be making a return appearance at the box office."

Ross looked at him at confusion. "What?"

"Oh, never mind."

Ross started to get comfortable, then looked at his friend again. "Chandler, what are you doing here? Weren't you supposed to take the chick and the duck to the vet an hour ago?"

Chandler leaped up in a panic. "Oh my God! Don't go near the toilet! STOP, I'M COMING!" He fled out of the coffee shop with quite a few customers staring after him.

Rachel said meaningfully, "He definitely needs some tranquillisers."

Phoebe hopped about impatiently. "Guys, what about the celebrity I saw?"

Ross looked at her. "What celebrity?"

Phoebe pointed. "That one! He's right outside, I saw him!"

Monica grabbed the magazine from Rachel and started leafing through it. "Sweetie, do you mean that Jack Kelly is right outside Central Perk?"

Ross jerked up at hearing the name. "Jack Kelly?" he said in astonishment.

Rachel looked at him and said, "You know him?"

Ross had settled down again, his face now closed. "We've met..." he said vaguely.

Monica said in wonder, "I can't believe what they're writing about this guy! I mean, he's like some real-life Indiana Jones. Look at this - he's been all over the world, to Cambodia, Nepal, Venezuela..."

Ross let out a soft snort. Rachel looked at him and said, "What's wrong, Ross? Are you jealous?"

Ross looked at her in amazement. "Of him? You've got to be kidding."

"Then why'd you make that noise?"

Ross looked uncomfortable. "What noise?"

Phoebe said, "The snort, Ross. We all heard it."

"What snort?"

Eagerly she replied, "This one." She did a fair imitation of Ross.

Rachel said mischievously, "No honey, I think it was more like this..." and she let out a very large snorting sound.

By this time Monica was grinning and decided to join in the game. "No no, it was more like this..." and made a pompous-sounding sniff.

All the girls started talking at once. "No you're wrong!", "Am not!", "Are too!", "Prove it!" and suddenly all three of them were making loud snorting sounds.

Ross couldn't take it anymore. "All right already, enough!" he said. "People are looking at you guys!"

The girls stopped, somewhat embarrassed, looking around at the customers that were staring back at them. "I can explain!" called out Monica.

"Hey, never mind, forget it," said Ross. "Anyway, the answer to the question, Pheeb, is that I was just clearing my throat."

Phoebe looked at him in confusion. "No you didn't, you..."

Ross glared at her. "Yes I did!"

Phoebe backed off. "Okay, okay, mister groucheybones. So, how did you meet Jack Kelly? I'd love to hear about it."

Ross looked very uncomfortable. "That - that was a long time ago, okay? I don't really want to talk about it. It's not like it's the happiest memory in my life anyway."

Just then a dark-haired older-looking version of Brad Pitt ran into

the Central Perk, and hurried over to the front counter where Gunther Lockhart, the manager, was busy serving customers. The guy said desperately, "Hey buddy, is there somewhere around here I can hide?"

Gunther looked at him suspiciously. "Are the police after you or something?"

The man looked over his shoulder in fear. "Worse. The cops you can hide from. The press, no way." He glanced around the coffee shop, and stopped when he saw Ross's face. "I don't believe it!" he exclaimed, and went over to join the friends.

Phoebe saw him first. "There he is! It's Jack Kelly!"

Jack paid no attention to her, he went straight to Ross and said "Digger, is that really YOU?"

Ross gave out a hopeless sigh, and got up. "Yeah it's me, Jack. Been a long time."

Jack stared at him. "That's all you've got to say? After all these years, just 'been a long time?' Come here!" He reached forth and grabbed Ross in a big hug.

Ross squirmed in his embrace. "Let go man, I'm suffocating here!"

Just then a crowd surged into the Central Perk, many carrying cameras and microphones. Gunther shouted, "Hey, you can't come in here with those!"

Jack let go of Ross and looked around and groaned. "Oh no, I thought I lost 'em. Come on bro, I need a hand at distracting these guys. You're perfect!"

"No!" Ross shouted. "I don't want anything to do with -"

Jack paid no attention and dragged Ross by the arm towards the crowd. "Ladies and gentlemen of the press, your attention please!" he said with a big smile. "Hey, I always wanted to say that! Let's not have any trouble with the management of this here fine establishment. I know you have a lot of questions, you're reporters right? The thing is, you've probably already heard everything about me. That's why I want to introduce you to my little brother here, Ross Geller. Let's take this outside, and we can answer all your questions, okay?"

The press surged all around the two men as they slowly made their way outside. Questions came shouted from all directions. "Mr. Geller, what's it like to be the brother of -", "Mr. Geller, how exactly are you and Jack Kelly -", "Mr. Geller, what do you do for -"

As the mob moved outside, the girls just stared at each other. Then slowly, all of them said at the same time: "OH - MY - GOD!"

* * *

><p>Later on in Rachel and Monica's apartment, Rachel, Phoebe and their friend Joey Tribbiani were seated around the kitchen table, while Monica was busy taking something out of the oven.<p>

"And then Jack Kelly said, 'I want to introduce you to my little brother here Ross Geller', just like that!" Phoebe said to Joey. "Can you believe it?"

"Wow!" said Joey. "Monica, I never knew you were related to someone so famous!"

Monica banged the oven shut. "Joey, he is not my brother!"

Joey looked confused. "But aren't you Ross's sister?"

"Yeah!"

"So then how can he be Ross's brother and not be yours?"

Monica looked pained. "Joey, he's not Ross's brother either okay? It's just something he made up!"

Joey grinned. "Cool!" he exclaimed. "I've got to remember that one!"

Phoebe looked at Monica. "Are you absolutely sure they're not related? I mean, they have very similar auras! I'm telling you, they -"

Monica banged the meal down on the table, killing the conversation. "Meatloaf's ready!" she shouted.

Rachel got up and went over to Monica. "Mon sweetheart, don't get too upset about this okay? Ross will be back here soon, I'm sure he'll be able to explain everything."

Monica looked at her gratefully. "Thanks, Rach. I mean, I know it's ridiculous, but I can't help thinking...oh, ever since I saw that videotape of my parents I still have nightmares about what they get up to!"

Just then the door opened and Ross walked in. "Hi everybody," he said closing it behind him and dropping onto the couch.

Everyone swarmed around him. "Ross, what's going on?" asked Monica.

Ross tried to find something honest to say. "It's complicated," was all he could come up with.

"COMPLICATED!" Monica shouted. "You mean all these years I've had another brother and you -"

"Whoa, hold it," said Ross holding up one hand. "Jack Kelly is NOT your brother. He's mine - I mean, sort of - but he's got nothing to do with our parents, okay? I mean -"

"Ross, dude, I don't get it," Joey said with a puzzled look. "I mean, who IS this guy?"

Just then the door opened and Jack walked in. "What were you trying to do, old buddy?" he said to Ross. "Lose me?"

Ross didn't look at him. "Actually, yeah."

"Come on Digger, what's with the attitude? You didn't use to be like this! I mean, what happened?"

Ross still wouldn't look at him. "I'd say, three months in the jungle with you."

The others were looking around in confusion. All of a sudden, Monica said, "Okay, time out here! What's going on? How'd you get here?"

Joey gestured. "Mon, he walked through the front door."

Monica hit him on the arm and he said nothing more, flinching in pain. "Ross, I think you better introduce us."

Jack nodded. "Yes, I agree completely. Exactly who are these visions of loveliness?"

The girls giggled. Ross got up with a sigh, and gestured. "Everybody, this is Jack Kelly. Jack, everybody."

"Ross!" Phoebe exclaimed.

Ross shrugged in defeat. "Okay, okay. This is Phoebe Bouffay, she's a close friend of mine. This is Joey Tribbianni, he's another friend who lives across the hall, in the apartment next door. This is my sister Monica and her roommate Rachel Green, this is their apartment."

Jack jerked back in surprise. "Hey, great, finally I get to meet you two! Digger's told me all about you. Pleasure to meet you, Phoebe, Joey..."

Rachel interrupted him. "Why are you calling Ross 'Digger'?"

Jack looked at her in surprise. "That's his name, Ross Digger Geller. He's the best dinosaur bones and stones man in the business. Haven't you ever heard it before?"

"No!" was the resounding chorus.

"Huh," Jack mused watching Ross. "Guess things have changed."

All of a sudden Chandler came into the apartment. "Hey everybody," he said, "I'm back - YAHH!" he yelled spotting Jack and moving backwards. "YOU!"

Jack laughed and embraced him as well. "Hi there, Ace. Great to see you again. Did Digger invite you to the party?"

Chandler still looked shell-shocked. "No, I - I live in the apartment across the hall. How did you get here?"

Joey cut in, "Like I keep tellin' everybody, he just walked through the door...OW!" he exclaimed as this time Rachel hit him in the same place, and carefully started rubbing the spot.

Phoebe asked, "Chandler, you know him too?"

Chandler grimaced. "Collided with him would be a better way to put it."

Jack said good-naturedly, "Come on Ace, are you still mad about last time? How was I supposed to know my date would set you up with her mother?"

Joey's eyes got large. "Hey Chandler, if you like older women I could set you up with -"

Monica spat out, "Not now, Joey! Everybody sit down!" The tone of her voice quickly made everybody obey. "Now let's get this straight. Ross, Chandler you both know this guy. Explain to me what's going on."

Jack looked at Ross and Chandler. "You mean, you've never mentioned me to your friends? I'm hurt."

Ross and Chandler both put a hand to their foreheads, as if a large headache had suddenly come on. "I'm getting too old for this," Chandler said.

Phoebe asked, "How exactly do you guys know each other?"

Ross sighed. "Jack and I were friends together at grad school. Chandler used to hang out with us, that's all."

Jack said in surprise, "That's all? Come on bro, we were like the Three Musketeers! We were inseparable!"

Chandler said sarcastically, "In your dreams, maybe. With everything you got up to, in my opinion it was more like the Three Stooges!"

Monica snapped, "Enough! A straight answer for a straight question, okay. How come you're calling Ross your brother?"

Jack looked at Ross. "You haven't told 'em anything?"

Ross didn't look at him. "No."

Jack leaned back and relaxed. "Okay, let me tell you the story. You see, when we were at grad school Digger and I went on an expedition - a private one - down to South America. During our time there I needed a blood transfusion, and your brother was the donor. That's why we're blood brothers!"

Monica looked relieved. "Oh, so that's why -"

"Yeah!"

Rachel looked at Ross. "Why haven't you told us any of this? I mean -"

Ross got up and started to pace, interrupting her. "I don't like to think about that, okay? Besides, he's not telling you everything, he -" he abruptly cut himself off.

Phoebe asked, "What?"

Chandler waited, then said, "The thing is, Jack got shot, and Ross had to save his life."

There was a moment of silence, and then the questions started flying. "Shot? Why?", "What happened?", "Who shot you?", "Can I see the scar?"

Jack held up his hand for quiet, and said, "One at a time, please! Let's just say Digger and I had a minor disagreement with one of the landowners down there, over some trivial little thing -"

Ross exploded, "Jack, that farmer told you he'd shoot you on sight if he ever caught you near his daughter again! And I was right there in the middle caught in the crossfire!"

Jack just smiled and shrugged. "Like I said, little problem. Ah, those were the days! The stories I could tell you about what Ace and Digger and I got up to -"

"That's another thing," Monica said. "What's with all the nicknames? I never heard of any of them before!"

Rachel said, "Yeah Ross, I thought you never -"

Ross cut her off, "I told you, I don't like to think about it! Besides, he was the only one who ever called me that - that name."

Jack looked at Chandler. "You want to tell 'em about this one?"

Chandler said sheepishly, "Well, one night we had this poker game, see, and we decided to choose names for ourselves from the deck of cards." The girls and Joey stared at him. "All right, we were young and completely drunk then, okay? Jack took the name Jack of course, Ross got the name King 'cause he won all of our money, and I got Ace because it was either that or Queen."

Joey looked interested. "You know dude -"

Chandler jumped up and glared at him. "Don't even think of going in that direction, Joe!"

Jack couldn't help laughing. "Ha. Haven't changed a bit, have you Ace? Didn't think you would." He got up and slung his arms around Chandler's neck and Ross's as well. "Oh man, I love it! The Three Musketeers are back together again!"

Ross got out of the headlock and looked at his old friend. "Why are you here, Jack?"

"Ross!" said Monica reprovingly.

Jack said, "Would you believe it's 'cause I missed you?"

Ross replied, "Maybe if I didn't know you so well."

Jack just smiled and shrugged. "I never could fool you for long. Three words buddy; I - NEED - YOU."

Ross didn't hesitate. "Not interested."

Jack came closer, a pleading expression on his face. "Come on Digger, just hear me out! I bet once you learn the score, you'll be begging me for the chance to get in on this!"

Rachel said, "Come on Ross, it can't hurt just to listen."

Jack turned to her with a big smile. "Yes! Listen to her, this girl knows what she's talking about!" He turned back to Ross. "Brother I'm telling you, I'm onto something big. I got satellite images of a new dig that nobody else has yet! Preliminary stuff that's absolutely amazing, only it's in Las Vegas right now with some of our old buddies. You'll be kicking yourself if you don't get in to investigate this!"

Ross turned and looked at him. "Sounds to me like you've already got everything lined up for yourself. What do you need me for? Since when did you start wanting to share the glory?"

"Ross!" said Rachel this time.

Looking frustrated, Jack said, "Okay, okay, the thing is, the dig's in China for heaven's sake! You've been there, I haven't. With your contacts, we could get this thing nailed in half the time it would take me to do it alone!"

"And?" Ross stared at him.

In an embarrassed tone of voice, Jack added, "Professor Schumacher is the guy in charge of the dig."

Ross nodded in understanding. "Ah ha, now I get it."

Joey asked, "Who's Professor Schumacher?"

Chandler replied, "Oh, he was one of their grad school professors during the old days."

Jack was looking desperate. "Come on Digger, he loves you! And you know how much he still hates me."

Ross said uncertainly, "I - I wouldn't say he hates you. Maybe he _"

Chandler interrupted, "Ross, the man threatened to tear Jack apart with his bare hands if he caught him that night!"

"What's all this?" Phoebe asked.

"Ancient history," said Ross quickly.

"Come on, tell us!" whined Rachel.

"Yeah, I want to know too," said Monica.

Jack said in a laughing voice, "Well, we were at a party one night, and afterwards we ended up at his house. I mean, all three of us were so blasted, we couldn't even walk straight! I suggested a bit of

target practice to sober up."

Ross said, "I still don't know how you talked me into that!"

Jack ignored him. "Anyway, we had some rocks, and we threw them. Fortunately Ace and Digger missed his house, but mine went straight through his window and hit his TV set!" He chuckled at the memory. "We really got out of there in a hurry, drunk or not! Lord, was he mad! I sent him a new set and all, but he still wants to have me roasted alive. The guy doesn't know the meaning of the words forgive and forget! That's why you've got to come with me, Digger." he directed this last sentence in all seriousness towards Ross.

Ross looked uncertain. "I can't leave just like that, work -"

Jack interrupted him. "Come on, you know that for something like this they'd even pay for your plane tickets! One phone call and problem solved."

Ross said, "I don't know..."

Jack said pleadingly, "Come on!" Then in a sly sort of voice, "You know, Margarita's going to be there too. She still asks about you. So I hear."

"Really?" Ross looked surprised and pleased.

Rachel asked at once, "Who's Margarita?"

Chandler immediately put in, "Now that was one wild woman! She could knock the socks off - hey!" he exclaimed as Monica elbowed him in the side.

"Any chance of gettin' her phone number?" Joey asked, before yelping as this time Phoebe hit him on the arm. "Will you guys quit hittin' me?" he said.

Ross went on, "There's also Ben to consider -"

Jack looked at him blankly. "Who's Ben?"

"My son." Ross said somewhat defensively.

"You've got a kid?" Jack said in amazement. Ross nodded. "Well, congratulations! When did all this happen?"

"Well, uh, a few years ago," Ross said quickly.

"I see," Jack replied. "Okay, conference time as they used to say. Excuse us you guys, but can we go somewhere private to talk?"

Joey gestured. "You can use our apartment across the hall."

"Thanks." Jack and Ross quickly left the apartment.

Rachel sat down and said, "Wow. I never knew you guys hung around with someone like that!"

Phoebe giggled and smiled. "I think he's kind of cute."

Chandler looked at her in horror. "Pheebs, don't even think it! I remember he always used to brag about how he's got a girl in every corner of the planet, so you're just going to get hurt!"

"Okay, okay." But Phoebe was still smiling as she looked towards the door and the apartment across the hall.

* * *

><p>As Ross and Jack entered the other apartment, Ross said, "This is a waste of time, Jack. I'm not coming with you."<p>

Jack turned to look at him and said, "Just one question. What happened to you?"

Ross looked at him in confusion. "What do you mean?"

Jack gestured with both hands. "You, man! You're acting like a suit!"

"A suit?"

"Come on, you remember what we used to call those guys who acted like they had an acute case of cramped boxers, or jockeyshorts! You weren't like this when I knew you all those years ago. What changed you?"

Ross was angry now. "I grew up, Jack. That's what you're supposed to do after grad school, remember?"

Jack was angry now too. "Yeah, sure. So what happened? You married Carol and settled down? All you need is a wife and kid and you're happy?"

Without thinking, Ross blurted out, "Carol and I aren't -" before cutting himself off.

Jack looked closely at him. "Divorced?" he said quietly. Ross nodded, not wanting to speak. "She has custody?" Ross nodded again. "Hey, I'm sorry Digger," Jack said in genuine sympathy. "I hate to be the one who said I told you so, but -"

"Yeah, yeah," Ross said. "But - but that was years ago. I, like, got over it."

Jack said, "Well, you're going to meet someone else, I know you can _"

Ross interrupted him. "Yeah, I already did. Her name was Emily. We got divorced soon after."

"Bummer," said Jack. "You're thinking three strikes and you're out, huh? But don't you see? This is the perfect opportunity for you to make a fresh start, buddy! I mean, ask yourself this; if the offer had come from anybody but me, would you have any hesitation in accepting it?"

Ross didn't say anything, but from the expression on his face it was obvious that the words had great impact. Jack saw it too, but decided

not to say anything as well.

Finally he said, "You think about it, bro. But don't take too long, 'cause I'm going whether you come with me or not." He turned around and walked out of the apartment.

Jack saw Rachel coming out of her apartment on the other side of the hall. He went up to her and said, "Listen, I've got to go. I'll be back this time tomorrow -"

Rachel interrupted him. "What did he say? Is he going with you?"

Jack shrugged. "I don't know. I'll ask him again when I see him."

Rachel sounded concerned. "Is he okay? I mean -"

Jack shrugged again. "You'd better ask him yourself, he's still in there."

"I will," she said.

"Okay, 'bye." and he left.

Rachel took a deep breath, and walked up to the door. She quickly swung it open, and as she did so a large banging sound was heard. She had a quick glimpse of Ross reeling backwards, and crashing onto the floor. "ROSS!" she screamed.

* * *

><p>Consciousness came to him slowly, gradually, a big bright blur that eventually resolved itself into human shapes; two male and three female. He started to struggle, but the arms of the others held him down.<p>

"Whoa, take it easy buddy, you took a big whack on the old noggin' there," said one of the men.

He looked around in confusion. "Where am I?" he asked. "Who are you people?"

The members of the group looked at each other in concern. One of the girls said, "Ross, honey, don't you remember us?"

He was still confused. "Who's Ross?"

The other man said with a goofy grin, "You are, man! Come on, quit foolin' around!"

The girls all said, "Joey!" and the tall blonde girl even hit him on the arm.

"Hey, come on Pheeb, don't do that!" cried Joey.

"Wait, just - just hold it a second," said one of the girls. "Ross, I'm your sister Monica. Do you remember that?"

He just shook his head. He was starting to get afraid, trying to move

away from them, and it showed.

The other girl leaned close towards him and said, "Your name is Ross Geller. I'm a friend, my name is Rachel Green. Don't be afraid, Ross, we're all friends here, we just want to help you."

`Ross', he thought to himself. `That's my name?' He said out loud, "Let go of me. Who ARE you guys?"

They backed off and looked at each other. The one calling herself Monica said, "I'm going to call for a doctor. He needs help."

Joey said, "Let's introduce ourselves first. It's only polite, y'know? Hey dude, I'm Joey Tribbianni, how you doin'?"

The one calling herself Rachel shouted, "Joey, he just got hit on the head and now he has amnesia, how do you think he's doing?"

Joey looked sheepish. "Okay, okay, you don't have to yell, you'll just upset the patient!"

Rachel said irritably, "Will you knock it off with the Dr. Remoray act?"

The blonde one called Pheebbs said, "Wow, his aura is really weird. Innocent like a baby! I've never seen anything like it before. Oh by the way hi, I'm Phoebe Bouffay, pleased to meet you!"

"I'm Chandler. Bing," said the other man. "Look, don't worry about anything Ross, we'll take care of things okay? I know you're confused and hurting right now, but we'll help you get your memory back!"

"Right!" said Joey. "You'll be back to checkin' out dinosaur bones in no time!"

"What?" Ross said.

"Now look what you've done!" exclaimed Phoebe and the five began arguing amongst themselves.

Ross (he had already started to think of himself with that name) was now looking all around him in fear and horror. He didn't know what to believe, he just knew he didn't want to be here any more. He lurched up and started running.

"Ross, wait!" a voice called out. He didn't pay any attention. He ran across the room, out the door, down the hall and outside onto the street. Light and noise assailed him from all directions. He turned left and started running randomly on the busy street.

"Ross!", "Come back!", "Dude, watch out!" he paid no attention, and just kept running.

Eventually he crashed into a man at a stop sign. "Hey, watch where -" the dark-haired man started to say as he turned around, and then said, "Oh, it's you!" he stared closely at Ross. "Buddy, are you okay?"

Ross wasn't paying attention, his head was trying to look in all

directions for signs of his pursuers. "Help me," he said.

"Sure thing, what's the problem?"

"Some people are after me! Can we go somewhere safe?"

"You bet! I knew you'd come around and accept my offer! Come on, there's a plane we can catch for Vegas on our way to China. We'll be on it or my name's not Jack Kelly!" So saying, the pair took off, and with the five friends in hot pursuit.

* * *

><p>In Las Vegas, the daytime heat was murderous, but inside the MGM Grand Hotel the airconditioning kept temperatures down to a level tolerable and pleasant for human beings. Jack and Ross stepped through the doorway into their room, and Jack looked at his friend. "What's wrong?"<p>

Ross looked at him. "Huh?"

Jack tried to explain. "You haven't said a word, not during the plane trip or the taxi ride. What's going on bro?"

Ross didn't know what to say. "I don't - look, I'm very grateful for what you did for me back in New York, but I - I think I better get going. Thanks and -"

"Whoa, wait a minute!" exclaimed Jack. "Where do you think you're going?"

That was a good question. Ross himself didn't know, but was afraid to confide anything to this stranger, despite his help.

All of a sudden there was a loud knocking at the door. "Who is it?" called out Jack.

"It's us!" said a voice.

"Who's us?" said Jack. He looked through the peephole, and said, "How did they get here?" Then with a look of surprise, he unlocked the door.

Straightaway Chandler, Joey, Monica, Rachel and Phoebe poured into the room. Everyone started talking at once. "We almost lost you!", "Ross honey, are you okay?", "Wow, what a great room!", "What did you think you were doing dragging us all the way across the country?", "Any chance I can get free towels?"

Jack yelled, "Hold it!" and everyone shut up. "What's going on? How did you guys get here?"

"Plane and taxi, dude, just like you," said Joey.

"Why'd you take off in New York and abduct my brother? I should have called the cops on you!" said Monica.

"Come on! The cops? What do you mean, abducted him? The press was after us, we just hopped on a plane to come here 'cause I've got to make contacts to get organised for the trip to China!"

"That wasn't the press you dummy, that was us!" said Rachel.

"It was?"

"Yeah, and it's not like Ross can go now in his condition!" said Phoebe.

"What condition?" asked Jack in confusion.

"You mean you don't know?" said Joey.

"Know what?" replied Jack.

"HE HAS AMNESIA!" all five of them said at the same time.

"Yeah right!" Jack laughed.

"I'm telling you man, we're serious!" Chandler exclaimed. "Look at him! He got hit on the head, and doesn't even know who we are!"

During the conversation Ross had backed up against the wall, not sure what was going on. But now he understood. "You know these people?" he asked Jack.

"Sure!" Jack said. "Well, I know Ace here, the other four I just met today but you introduced us yourself, Digger!"

"Who?" Ross asked in confusion.

Jack stopped in surprise, and turned to face the others. "Hey, you weren't kidding were you? What happened exactly?"

Rachel looked embarrassed and said, "It was all my fault. The apartment front door - I mean I didn't know he was right there in front of it, I just wanted to talk to him and then WHAM, it hit him and he was out like a light!"

Ross looked at her. "You mean, this - this is all your doing?"

Rachel pleaded with him, "Ross honey, please don't be mad it was an accident -"

Ross cut her off, glaring at her. "How do I know that? I don't know you. I don't know any of you people. For all I know you could be a bunch of axe-murderers or some other kind of lunatics. I'm going to go find the police. Out of my way!" and he started to make towards the door.

Jack stopped him. "Hey, I don't think that's going to help, bro. You know, I might be able to help you with the amnesia thing. Besides, I did help get you out of New York, didn't I? Trust me!"

Ross thought this over. Finally he said, "Well, maybe. How - how can you help me?"

Jack said, "Oh, simple. Like this." Then he slugged Ross right on the jaw, sending him reeling back and hitting the wall, to collapse in a

heap on the floor.

"You maniac!" screamed Rachel, and jumped onto his back trying to scratch his eyes out. Jack staggered around the room trying to get her off. "OW! Hey! Get off me!" he called out.

"Rach! Rach!" Monica said. "That's not going to help! Get down from there, we need to check on Ross!" Slowly she did.

Chandler looked at Jack. "That does it, this time you've really gone too far. What were you trying to achieve anyway?"

"Come on, it always works in the movies!" Jack said grinning. "Five bucks says he wakes up as good as new!"

"You're on!" said Joey. "I used to be Dr. Drake Remoray on TV you know, and I can tell ya that never works in real life!"

"We'll see," said Jack with a smirk.

Phoebe, Rachel and Monica were all gathered around Ross by now, and were trying to wake him up. The three men came over, and lifted him and carried him to the couch. "Either I'm getting old or he's heavier than I remember," said Jack grumbling.

"You do this before?" asked Joey.

Jack laughed. "You try living in the South American jungle for three months without it!"

"Quiet!" said Monica. "He's waking up!"

"Oh my head," said Ross dazedly.

"Ross, Ross, are you okay?" asked Rachel urgently. Then another thought struck her. "Are you now you again?"

"Wha'?" Ross replied not yet fully awake.

"I think he is!" said Phoebe excitedly. "His aura is back to normal!"

"Pheeb, what are you talking about?" Ross said.

"He's back!" Monica exclaimed, hugging him.

Jack turned to Joey with hungry smile and held out his hand. "Pay up, that's five bucks easy money."

Joey shrugged, and got out his wallet and paid him. "You wanna go double or nothin'?" he asked hopefully.

"JOEY!" everyone said at the same time.

"What? It was just a civil question!" he said with a hurt expression.

By now Ross had struggled to his feet, and turned to face Jack. "You hit me!" he exclaimed. "That was your idea of HELPING me?"

Jack shrugged. "Don't knock it buddy, it worked. A quack would have done the same thing really, only charged you a lot more money."

"I don't believe you!" Ross yelled. "You - you -" Suddenly he stopped, laughed and embraced him, to the amazement of the others. "Thank God you haven't changed. Same old pain in the ass!"

"Of course!" said Jack in surprise. "The only things more dependable are death and taxes. Hey everybody," he said stepping back from Ross, "let's go have some drinks down at the bar to celebrate the return of the old Digger Geller. First round is on me!"

With that, everyone went out of the room and quickly downstairs.

* * *

><p>The seven friends were crowded into a booth in the hotel bar, and some of them had clearly had a lot to drink. Jack said to Ross, "So you're sure I can't persuade you to come with me to China?"<p>

Ross nodded. "I'm sure. Look, Jack, that letter I gave you to give to Professor Schumacher, and the list of people in the Ministry of Cultural Affairs ought to be more than enough to help you. You don't need me any more than you need a double hernia!"

Jack looked down at his beer. "I know all that, but still...I wanted you to come, bro. For old time's sake, you know? God, listen to me, I must be getting old. Starting to miss my friends. And hey, Margarita would have loved to see you again of course."

"Hey, who's this girl Margarita?" asked Rachel drunkenly.

"Never mind," said Ross hurriedly.

A waitress came up and asked, "Can I get you folks anything?"

Joey looked at her and started smiling. "Hey, 'ow you doin'?" he said in his best drunk Italian accent.

"Just fine, sir," she said with a professional smile. "Does anybody want anything from the bar?"

"Yeah, I'll have another beer," said Ross.

"Yes, sir," she said.

"Are you doin' anythin' after work?" Joey asked her hopefully.

She smiled. "I go off duty in ten minutes. You could try to meet me in the Copacabana lounge if you like."

"You got it!" said Joey. As the waitress left, Joey got up and tried to gain his balance. "'Scuse me, but I gotta go find this Cobycamana thing place." He staggered off in the general direction of the bar.

Jack said, "Well, my flight leaves in the morning, so I guess I better turn in. Unless you guys want to do anything? I hear the roulette wheel and the one-armed bandits are a lot of fun to try."

"Ooh! Ooh! I want to try those!" said Phoebe with a pleading smile.

"You got it." He and Phoebe slid out of the booth and walked off.

Chandler and Monica looked at one another, and then looked at Rachel and Ross. Chandler said, "I don't know about you guys, but for me it's been a long day. First the vet, then Jack shows up, then Ross's amnesia, then a trip to Vegas! I've got to get some rest. Oh God, I just remembered - I have to give a presentation at work tomorrow!" he sat up in alarm.

Monica tried to calm him down. "Chandler - Chandler! Relax. We can just ring up those people and reschedule it. Tell them you're in Vegas for a funeral or something."

"You're right! You're right! Come on, we've got to hurry, the office will be empty soon!" He got up and dragged Monica away by the arm, who just barely had time to shrug and say "G'bye!" to Ross and Rachel.

Suddenly Ross and Rachel found themselves alone, and Ross realised he was a little embarrassed and unsure what to say. "Listen Rach -"

The waitress showed up, and handed a Ross a glass of beer from a tray. "Your beer, sir," she said.

"Thanks," said Ross, and paid her with a large tip. "Thank you, sir," she said with a smile and walked off.

Ross took a big gulp out of his beer and turned to face Rachel. "Uh, what I was trying to say before -"

"Ross," said Rachel not paying attention, "who's Margarita?"

"What?" said Ross.

"Tell me about her!" insisted Rachel.

"Well, there isn't all that much to tell," said Ross in confusion. "Jack and Chandler and I knew her in the old days, and afterwards she went on to become Professor Schumacher's assistant. Jack was always saying she was crazy about me, but that was all just a lot of talk. Besides, she had practically the entire male student body chasing after her, and Carol was the only one I was interested in back then anyway."

"Carol." Rachel said in a vague sort of voice.

"Yeah," Ross said. He had another quick drink. "Listen, Rachel, about what I said today - blaming you for what happened - I'm really sorry. I mean, I wasn't myself -" he chuckled, "I mean I REALLY wasn't myself, but that's no excuse. I - I just wanted to tell you that I need to apologise for -"

Rachel came closer to him and said, "I don't care about that."

Ross was surprised. "You don't?"

"Nope."

Ross shrugged. "Well, okay then, I guess we should -"

"Lemme finish." she said.

"Sure," he said.

"You wanna know a shecret?" she said, sounding more drunk than ever.

"Okay, tell me," said Ross.

"Thing is -" she stopped, then decided to go on. "The thing ish, even though I wa' shorry for what happen' to you, I wa' glad too, in away."

Ross was completely confused, and decided to have another drink. "I'm sorry, Rach, but I don't get it."

"Don' you shee?" she said. "It wa' a chance for a fresh shtart! No Carol, no Julie, no Bonnie, no Emily." she paused, then hiccuped. "No Chloe!" she exclaimed loudly.

Ross started looking around in worry. "Rachel, I think you've had enough -"

"No I haven', no' yet!" she said. She looked at him with the solemnity of the truly intoxicated. "Shut up and kiss me."

Ross was completely stunned. "What the -"

Rachel got tired of talking and threw herself at him, locking her lips against his. Thus, it was already way too late for Ross to do anything about the situation.

Early the next morning, the alarm clock went off as Rachel and Ross lay sleeping together peacefully under the covers, in the bed of one of the hotel's king-size suites. Rachel turned over and snuggled up against Ross. "Could you get that, sweetie?" she mumbled still half-asleep.

"Sure," he mumbled back, just as the alarm switched off by itself. He twisted around and said, "Uh, honey, could you move over a bit, I'm cramped -"

"Oh Ross, you're always saying - Ross?" her eyes popped open, now wide-awake.

"Rachel?" Ross did the same thing.

They looked at one another, and both let out a soft scream. Rachel moved as far away from him as possible. "What are you doing here?" she demanded.

"What am I doing here? What are you doing here?" he demanded right back at her.

Rachel looked at him in panic and said, "Oh my God, did we -?"

Ross looked back at her. "I don't know. I can't remember. We definitely had too much to drink last night though. I've really got to work on -"

"ROSS!" she shouted.

He groaned, "Oh yeah, I remember this part of our relationship. You really aren't a morning person are you?"

Rachel wanted to hit him. "Ross. Ross. Just tell me - did we or didn't we?"

Ross tried to remember. "I don't think so. Besides," he said examining himself under the covers, "I think I've still got all my clothes on. You?"

She did the same thing. "Yeah. Me too."

He shrugged. "Well, there you go. We had too much to drink, then just passed out on the bed. No big deal."

"NO BIG DEAL?" Rachel screamed.

"Does this mean you have another letter for me to read?" Ross asked innocently.

Rachel's face went red and she started to splutter, "You - you -"

Suddenly there was a knock at the door and Chandler came bursting in. "Ross, have you seen Rachel? We've been looking everywhere -" He stopped, taking in the scene before him. "Oh my!" he said slowly. "It looks like someone got lucky last night!"

Rachel groaned, "Chandler, it's not what you think -"

Just then Monica, Phoebe and Joey came into the room as well. "Chandler, does he know -" Joey said. Then he noticed, and said in wonder, "Wow, either I had too much to drink last night, or it's startin' all over again!"

Ross said, "Hey, nothing happ -"

Phoebe interrupted him in a happy voice. "Yay! I always knew this would happen! You guys really are lobsters!"

"Could we please get a word in?" Rachel said impatiently. "Nothing happened last night!"

Monica looked at her sceptically. "You expect us to believe that?"

"Yes!" said Ross, "We still have our clothes on, we just passed out in here last night, that's all!"

"Really?" said Chandler.

"YES!" said Ross and Rachel together.

"Come on you guys," Phoebe pleaded. "Jack's almost ready to go! We've got to hurry or he'll miss his plane!"

"Just a second," grunted Ross. As he and Rachel got out of the bed, everyone saw that he was wearing a formal tuxedo and she was wearing a white wedding dress.

For a moment, no one said anything as the newlyweds stared at themselves, and then at each other with their mouths open. Then in perfect sync, all six of them said at the same time: "OH - MY - GOD!"

****THE END****

End
file.